

PROGRAM TERMINATIONS—Continued

	FY '95 origi- nally en- acted	FY '95 post re- sission	FY '96	FY '97
Senior Demo Program	1,000	1,000	0	0
Natl Ed Standards/Improvement	2,000	2,000	0	0
RRB Special Management Fund	659	659	659	0

OPEN HOUSE TOWN MEETINGS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in the absence of any other Senator on the floor at the present time, I will utilize this occasion to discuss the open house town meetings which I held during the course of the past recess in August to share with my colleagues and those who may be watching on C-SPAN 2 some of the observations that I found in traveling in my State of Pennsylvania and in meeting with my citizens.

I make it a point to have meetings in every one of the Pennsylvania counties as often as I can, and by the end of September, by the end of this month, I will have covered all of my 67 counties, something that I find very, very valuable.

What I do as a matter of format—and I think this is similar to what many Senators do—is I make a very brief statement, as to what we have done, and then I throw the floor open for questions. Usually I get somewhere in the range of 15 to 20 questions. Regrettably, our mail allocation has been cut down. In prior years, it had been possible to send mail to our entire counties. That mail allocation has been reduced so that it is not possible to send mail to all of the counties. This is something which I think the Senate ought to give serious consideration to revising. I believe that we ought to be frugal when it comes to mailings which do have some political import, but where a Senator himself or herself goes out into a community to appear to make a presentation and respond to questions, I think that is the very essence of our democratic process. To the extent that the mail notifies people in a very direct way of the presence of a Senator coming into the community, my sense is that is well worth doing.

The dominant theme that I found in traveling through Pennsylvania, Mr. President, was a dissatisfaction or a distrust of government. There is great cynicism in America today about what is going on in Washington, DC. It is my sense that unless you go out and actually talk to the people—and not just in shopping centers and not just casually, as we have our social contacts during the course of a recess period—that there is not a full understanding as to how much apathy, cynicism and outright distrust of our Government there is. I noted the Washington Post, on the 29th of August, just a few days ago, had on its front page a survey which noted “three out of four say they do not trust the Government or its leaders to do what is right.”

My own findings would confirm that, as I have been in many open house

town meetings during the course of the past month and throughout the past year. At one of my open house town meetings, one of the citizens was wearing a cap that had the word “militia” printed on it. There are many people in the militia in the United States today. How many exactly, we do not know.

In my capacity as chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, we had hearings concerning militias during the 104th Congress. We had Colonel Olson from the Michigan militia come in and speak in very unflattering terms about the Congress of the United States.

There have been estimates into the millions as to how many militia members there are.

And in one of my open house town meetings, the word “revolution” was used in expressing very grave disagreement with what the Government was doing, on this occasion the importation of sludge from New York and New Jersey to fill abandoned mines in Pennsylvania. And there is great concern in my State, as there is I think in this country generally, about limitations on so-called second amendment rights, and great distrust as to what the Government is doing.

During the course of the past month, Ruby Ridge was again in the news with a report by the Department of Justice. The report stated that there would not be any prosecutions as to the investigation which had been conducted by the Department of Justice. This investigation lasted almost 2 years after it was initiated in the fall of 1995, a period of time which I think is unwarranted on the facts as I know them.

I have had discussions with both the Attorney General and the U.S. attorney in charge of that investigation and will talk about that in some greater detail. After the Department of Justice report was issued, the prosecuting attorney in Boundary County, ID, returned an indictment against Special Agent Lon Horiuchi of the FBI on the charge of involuntary manslaughter on the killing of Mrs. Vicki Weaver which occurred in that confrontation back on August 21, 1992.

The DA for Boundary County returned the indictment of murder in the first degree against Mr. Kevin Harris for the killing of Deputy Marshal William Degan. The incidents which we have seen in Waco and in Ruby Ridge have fanned, I think, really great distrust for the Government, something which we are going to have to address in greater detail.

In my personal opinion, the Congress has not yet had appropriate oversight hearings on Waco, notwithstanding the fact that we have done something there. I think we have made a start on Ruby Ridge when the subcommittee which I chaired back in September and October of 1995, with 14 days of hearings, heard from about 60 witnesses and published a 150-page report. I intend to talk about that in greater detail on the floor of the Senate when we have some time, perhaps yet this afternoon.

But I do want to comment about the grave concerns which I have found in my State about distrusting the Government and how the Ruby Ridge subject came up because it was very much in the news during the weeks of mid-August, August 13, 14, and 15, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. And I was in western and central Pennsylvania, August 20, 21, and 22 when I was again doing open house town meetings.

I also found great concern in the open house town meetings I conducted about the way campaigns are financed. And I believe that the hearings we have had before the Governmental Affairs Committee during the month of July have resonated more in America than many people believed. It is unfortunate, I think, that there has not been more television coverage because that is the way the American people get most of their information these days.

Only Fox has carried them live, the Fox cable channel. And CNN has covered to a slight extent, and C-SPAN has not covered them live but has replayed them. And there are many people who watch C-SPAN. Insomniacs are people who watch during the late hours of the night. You can probably catch the Governmental Affairs hearings if you watch at about 3 a.m. to see what is going on. But I found that many people have been watching them and were very concerned about what is going on.

My view is that we ought to have campaign finance reform. And I voted for cloture last year to bring the legislation offered by Senator MCCAIN and Senator FEINGOLD to the floor. I believe that there is a difficulty with that particular piece of legislation on calling for television stations to give free time because I think that is a taking of property without compensation required by the fifth amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

But I have been working on legislation, some of which has been motivated by what I have seen in the Governmental Affairs hearing. I intend to talk about that as well, perhaps later this afternoon if there are no other Senators on the floor who come to offer amendments.

I have also heard, Mr. President, considerable concern about what is happening with Social Security and Medicare. And regrettably there has been a practice of using those issues for campaign purposes, something done by both political parties. I do not suggest blame in what has been done in the campaign sense. But I think we would be better advised if we tailored our representations a little closer to what the facts are.

But these open house town meetings are populated very significantly by our senior citizens who have more time to come to the open house town meetings. And perhaps there is greater interest among senior citizens in what is going on in Government because of Social Security and Medicare.

But people are questioning whether Social Security is really secure. And

my view is that it is. They are questioning about what is happening with Medicare. And I think the American people have not understood that when we have considered changes in Medicare that we have not sought to cut Medicare but instead to restrain the growth of Medicare. We have looked at an increase in funding for Medicare in excess of 10 percent a year. We have sought to reach compromise between Democrats and Republicans to restrain the growth somewhere in the 7-percent range, give or take a little. And that is two or three times the rate of inflation. But if we are to maintain Medicare, we are going to have to be able to pay for it and to contain the rate of growth on Medicare.

I am pleased that we have established in the recent legislation a commission which will take up Medicare in some detail on a bipartisan basis to try to give assurance to the public that what we are doing here is sound governmentally and sound financially. It is not for political scare tactics. We had the Commission for Social Security back in 1983 which put Social Security on a solid basis.

We had then Senator Pepper as a Member of the House, a very distinguished representative of senior citizens, someone the senior citizens had a lot of confidence in. We had a slight increase in the tax on Social Security and a slight delay in receiving benefits and put Social Security on a sound basis back in 1983. And it is my hope that we will be able to do that again.

People want to know about a trust fund, why we do not have Social Security off budget. That I believe, Mr. President, is something we ought to be doing. It is currently part of the unified budget so that it makes the deficit appear smaller. But it really ought to be segregated in a trust fund.

Similar concerns were expressed about the highway trust fund. Across Pennsylvania, and I think reflective of America, people want the moneys used for the gasoline tax to be used for the highway trust fund or mass transit. Across my State, I hear enormous concerns about Continental 1, a major highway, transcontinental highway, which will start in Toronto, Canada, and go all the way to Florida. It picks up a stretch of highway known as U.S. 219 in Pennsylvania where people are very anxious to have that on the books. And we would have the money, if we use the highway trust fund, for that purpose.

We had amendments narrowly defeated in both the Senate and the House by 2 votes, I recollect, 216 to 214 in the House, and I know it was 51 to 49 here in the Senate where we attempted to allocate more funds for highways. I hear concerns all over my State about the need for more transportation funding. And the Mon Valley Expressway linking Fayette County, Uniontown to Pittsburgh would be a bonanza to develop that section of southwestern Pennsylvania which has been hit so

hard by the losses of the steel industry, the coal industry, and the glass industry.

And all over the State there is this interest in highways. I can personally attest, traveling around the back roads of my State, how tough it is to travel, to get behind a big truck. It happens all the time on a two-lane highway, and what had been planned as a 45-minute trip takes an hour and 10 minutes. The infrastructure is so very, very vital. We ought to be taking a much closer look there.

There are similar concerns on airports, as I traveled through the State, where airports ought to be improved. Infrastructure would improve job opportunities. Major corporations, companies want to settle in communities which have access to air service.

I also heard grave concern about what is going on with the managed care and with HMO's and with the issue of the so-called gag rule where family doctors are not permitted to have a referral to a specialist. We legislated on what was called the drive-by deliveries, requiring that women giving birth spend at least 48 hours in the hospital. Further, we have pending legislation on so-called drive-by mastectomies, where women who undergo that very difficult operative procedure are not ousted from the hospital. These complicated issues are obviously matters which are better left without congressional micromanagement, but something which we may have to get into, to some extent. But there is grave concern as managed care move across America, that there be fair access for the people who are insured and concern about HMO's paying their fair share on medical education and the so-called DSH proposals of disproportionate share for care for the indigent.

These are some of the items which I heard a great deal about as I traveled through my State.

RUBY RIDGE

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I see no other Senator on the floor seeking recognition, so I will amplify my remarks at this time about the concerns which I have on the congressional oversight and the need for additional congressional oversight on the incidents arising out of Ruby Ridge.

Mr. President, the incident at Ruby Ridge has been very heavily publicized. And there have been a number of investigations on this subject. And investigations are continuing at the present time.

This incident occurred back on August 21, 1992, which is more than 5 years ago. With the possible exception of the incident at Waco, this incident at Ruby Ridge has caused tremendous consternation with respect to action by the Federal Government.

The essential events at Ruby Ridge were that a man named Randy Weaver had been arrested for selling two sawed-off shotguns and had not made

his court appearances. A large contingent of Federal law enforcement officers went to his home at Ruby Ridge in Idaho to take Mr. Randy Weaver into custody. It is a very complex matter, a very lengthy matter. I will only summarize the essential factors. A firefight broke out on August 21, 1992. In the course of that firefight, a Federal marshal, deputy marshal, Mr. William Degan, was killed, 14-year-old Sammy Weaver, son of Mr. Randy Weaver and Mrs. Vicki Weaver, was killed, and Mrs. Vicki Weaver was killed.

The large force which had assembled there to take Mr. Randy Weaver into custody did so because of reports by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agency, which were false, that there had been prior convictions as to Mr. Randy Weaver—and he had not been convicted of anything—and that Mr. Weaver was a suspect in bank robbery cases, which is untrue.

The essential findings, the essential overstatements, were summarized by FBI Director Louis Freeh, who testified at our Judiciary subcommittee hearings on October 19, 1995, as follows: "One misstatement of fact exaggerated to another one, into a huge pile of information that was just dead wrong." As a result of those erroneous statements, this firefight occurred and these deaths occurred.

There have been a number of investigations conducted. Most recently, a brief report was filed by the Department of Justice on Ruby Ridge, which is only a small part of the full report which was filed. This one is eight pages. It was issued back on August 15. In the course of this report, there is a notation of some six prior investigations on this matter. There had been an exhaustive report by the Department of Justice task force that was issued on June 10, 1994. There was an investigation conducted by the FBI Inspection Division. There was an investigation initiated by the Department of Justice Office of Professional Responsibility, following a letter from special agent Eugene Glenn, who was the on-scene commander in Idaho. He was an FBI agent in charge in Idaho. Then the Judiciary subcommittee conducted its inquiry, and then there was an investigation conducted by U.S. attorney Michael Stiles, who is the U.S. attorney for the eastern district of Pennsylvania. He took over for the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. Mr. Eric Holder had recused himself because he knew some of the agents who were involved.

I had expressed my own concern on a number of occasions about the length of time that the Department of Justice investigation was taking because there were a number of FBI officials who had been suspended, with pay, and were simply sitting dormant. Based upon the knowledge that I had of this incident, because of the hearings which we had through the Judiciary subcommittee, it seems to me that the matter should have been concluded a long time ago.